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SUBJECT: SENATOR BOXER DISCUSSES WOMEN, CLIMATE WITH SG

SUMMARY

¶1. Senator Barbara Boxer came to New York to meet with Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in her capacity as Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittees on International Organizations and Global Women's Issues. She raised the need to quickly appoint a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on sexual violence in armed conflict, to establish a new UN entity for women, to have more women serve as special envoys and peace mediators, and to press the GDRC to dismiss all five army commanders suspected of sexual violence. She also stressed that the U.S. will play a leading role on climate change, described the prospects of new Senate legislation, and stressed that existing legislation allows the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate polluters. End summary.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

¶2. (SBU) Senator Boxer met with SYG Ban and a number of his key advisers October 12 to urge his prompt attention to women's issues, in particular the naming of an SRSG on sexual violence as called for in SCR 1888. Boxer noted that the recent rapes in Guinea in broad daylight added to the urgency. Ban agreed this appointment would be made quickly, asked whether a woman or man would be more suitable for this task, and said he looked forward to receiving from the US a list of possible candidates to consider. Ambassador DiCarlo promised to provide a short list to the SYG within a week. DPA U/SYG Pasco remarked that the Guinea rapes were appalling and that the SYG had encouraged the High Commissioner for Human Rights to send investigators to Guinea.

¶3. (SBU) Boxer expressed disappointment at reports that some of the five DRC army commanders suspected of using mass rape as a tactic of war are still at their posts, and asked the SG to use his influence with the GDRC to press for their dismissal. He promised to pursue the matter, and noted that President Kabila had initially been casual about the issue of sexual violence but had told the SG, as of a month ago, that rape prevention was now his top priority. (SRSG Alan Doss informed us this week that all five have been removed from their positions.)

¶4. (SBU) Boxer also underlined the need to establish a new, consolidated gender entity at the UN without delay. Ban replied that his report on the framework of the reorganization would be out by the end of the year, and that internal staff discussions had already begun.

¶5. (SBU) Boxer noted the need for more women as special envoys and peace mediators. Ban replied that his record of appointing women to high level positions was unmatched at the UN, that he required that every "short list" presented to him on each appointment of an A/SG or higher must include at least one woman's name, and that there were now nine women at the U/SYG level.

CLIMATE CHANGE

¶6. (SBU) SYG Ban underlined the need for U.S. leadership on the climate change issue and asked about the prospects of climate

legislation passing the Senate. Boxer replied that she would hold hearings within two weeks on the Boxer-Kerry bill, after which the bill would be marked up and sent to Committee. She anticipated that the bill could get to the Senate floor by November, in time to create momentum for the climate talks in Copenhagen.

17. (SBU) Boxer noted that the U.S. Supreme Court had recently ruled that the Clean Air Act, which has been in place for decades, gives authority to the EPA to take steps to stop the production of carbon and greenhouse gases. Other steps, short of new legislation, that the U.S. is taking include funding within the economic stimulus package clean technology, the recent reduction by 6-8 percent of the U.S.'s carbon footprint, and action by one thousand mayors and several states to reduce carbon emissions. The SYG expressed gratitude for the U.S.'s leadership.

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